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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Hartford) STATE VICTIM ADVOCATE MICHELLE CRUZ TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE REGARDING THE IMPACT OF THE BUDGET REDUCTIONS TO THE COLD CASE UNIT WITHIN THE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Michelle Cruz, Esq., the State Victim Advocate, will hold a press conference regarding the Governor's Budget Reduction Proposals to the Division of Criminal Justice. Michelle will be joined by the surviving family members of Kathy Hardy, murdered on March 7, 2006 in Branford, CT, among other surviving family members of cold case homicide victims. The press conference will be held on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at the State Capitol in Room 310 at 1:00 p.m.

"Kathy Hardy represents just one of hundreds of cold cases in Connecticut," stated Michelle Cruz, State Victim Advocate. "Each cold case victim has family, friends, and loved ones waiting for justice." Kathy Hardy's family has been waiting nearly six years. "The budget reductions to the Division of Criminal Justice thus far have depleted the Division's staffing of the Cold Case Unit," added Cruz.

The Cold Case Unit was established within the Office of the Chief State's Attorney in May of 1998 to focus special investigative efforts on crimes that have gone "cold," that is, unsolved for a prolonged period of time. The Unit has solved forty cold cases with a prosecuted success rate of ninety-three percent. Under Kane's administration, a second unit was created in 2007 in New London County. Kane expanded the manpower of the units by encouraging partnerships, such as coordination with local law enforcement agencies statewide. The successful results being achieved by the Unit are remarkable, considering the very limited resources previously allocated to the Unit. The Cold Case Unit provided an invaluable service to victims, their families and the residents of the State of Connecticut, in a very cost effective manner.

"Unless the Division has the ability to fully staff the Cold Case Unit, the reality for the surviving family members and friends is that the case of their loved one will forever remain cold; for the residents of Connecticut, potential dangerous and violent murderers will remain at large and be a threat to our communities," said Cruz.

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